

TOWN OF ESSEX  
Park and Recreation Commission

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29 West Avenue • Essex, Connecticut 06426  
Telephone (860) 767-4340 x110 • FAX (860) 767-8509

**Regular Members**

*Robert Russo, Chairman*  
*Anthony Mosa*  
*Douglas Senn*  
*Virginia Willetts*  
*Peter Sarner, Alternate*

**Unapproved**

**MINUTES Tuesday, December 6, 2016**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Call to Order and Attendance**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Park & Recreation Commission was conducted on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 in Conference Room B, of the Essex Town Hall.

**Attending Members:**

Anthony Mosa  
Virginia Willetts  
Doug Senn

**Absent Members:**

Robert Russo  
Peter Sarner

**Staff:**

Mary Ellen Barnes, Park & Recreation Director  
Stella Beaudoin, Recording Clerk

A Mosa called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**Approval of November 1, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes**

**MOTION** made by V. Willetts to approve the November 1, 2016 meeting Minutes as presented;

**SECONDED:** D. Senn; **Voting In Favor:** V. Willetts, A. Mosa, D. Senn; **Opposed:** None;

**Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0.

**Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present.

### Financial Reports

M. Barnes reported on the General Fund, noting that there were no unexpected expenses however the summer water bill was paid at a total of \$6,792.43 which covers the cost for all of the parks that irrigated.

M. Barnes reported on the Recreation Program Fund, noting that as related to revenue, at this point, the prior year revenues were higher, however the current budget correlates with the expenditures and to date, the Commission is ahead of the game by \$13,000 from last year at this time. M. Barnes reported that the Commission is bringing in revenue comparable to the expenses, and while the overall student body number is down, the amount of students enrolled in Park & Rec programs are the same as they were last year.

**MOTION** made by V. Willetts to approve the Financial report as presented; **SECONDED:** D. Senn; **Voting In Favor:** V. Willetts, A. Mosa, D. Senn; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0.

### Director's Report / Parks & Program

#### Parks and Programs

- Ivoryton Illuminations is scheduled for December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the lights will be lit throughout the month of December. The lights are installed by volunteers who also maintain the illuminations throughout the month. V. Willetts stated that this year's Ivoryton light show has been touted as the top third best display in the State of Connecticut.
- Essex Youth Basketball has begun.
- Spring Summer Brochure is in the works for 2017 and hope to have it available for February 1. M Barnes reported that the concert lineup is completely booked for the summer 2017.
- The Park & Rec Department will sponsor Buddy Basketball for 2017 which is 100% self-sufficient and is run by volunteers. This is a program for youth who are identified with special needs who are paired with a buddy/high school student volunteer.

#### Department Update

- Mary Ellen Barnes was recognized by the Essex Garden Club as an honorary member.
- Tim LaChance has resumed his role as basketball coordinator – his office hours are M-F, 12-4pm, and Friday Evening for Basketball games.
- Kai Recchia's office hours are Mon-Friday 9am-12noon. She additionally assists with Social Services 5 hours per week.

### **Main Street Park**

- M. Barnes reported that repairs to the sea wall are complete.
- M Barnes reported that Japanese Knotweed remediation is planned upon the first hard freeze.

### **Grove & Tennis Courts**

No Updates

### **Dickinson Park**

No Updates

### **Sunset Pond**

No Updates

### **Ivoryton Green**

Irrigation has been winterized

### **Viney Hill Brook Park**

Update under New Business

### **Comstock Park**

No Updates

### **Clark's Pond**

No Updates

### **Hubbard Park**

No Updates

### **Old Business**

- **Capitol Sinking Fund Program and Asset Inventory Review & Approval**

M. Barnes stated that at their November 2016 meeting, the Board of Finance tabled the request for Capital Funds for the appropriation of the scoreboard at Comstock. The Board of Finance will conduct a meeting on January 19, 2017 and they have requested M. Barnes to be in attendance and provide the Board with further information and detail related to the purchase and installation of the scoreboard. M. Barnes stated that the Board will present before the Board of Finance at their January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

M. Barnes noted that the he Board of Selectmen approved the request for the funding of Capital Funds for the appropriation of the scoreboard at Comstock, however the Board of Finance tabled discussion to their January 19, 2017 meeting.

M. Barnes previously provided members with the January 8, 2014 Minutes from the Park and Recreation Commission meeting at which Kelly Sterner, Town of Essex Treasurer presented on the Sinking Fund and the process related to requests for appropriations from this fund. M. Barnes distributed a letter from the Park and Rec Commission that was sent to the Board of Finance in follow-up to that January 8<sup>th</sup> Park and Rec meeting, in which she requested that the Board of Finance provide the Commission with written guidelines for step by step instruction on how to request appropriation from the sinking fund.

M. Barnes distributed documents that describe the Capital Improvement Program of the Park and Recreation Commission as well as the assets inventory of Town Parks. The Commission has identified a prioritized listing of Capital projects that will need to be addressed in the next five years.

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is a multi-year planning program which identifies capital projects and equipment purchases, provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. The plan provides a link between Town, Park and Recreation Department, and a comprehensive and strategic plan for the annual budget. It is also necessary to forecast what the Commission anticipates will show future demands and growth, which will involve an inventory of existing assets: facilities, infrastructure and equipment. Because the CIP includes financing issues, the Park and Recreation Department and Commission seek input from the Boards of Selectmen and Finance. Long term capital planning in the Park and Recreation Department takes place for three categories of capital projects: park equipment, park remediation and recreation facilities.

The Inventory of Facilities and Assets serves to provide a reference for the full range of equipment and infrastructure at town parks and facilities under the direction of the Park and Recreation Commission. The inventory lists the assets at each park and its priority, or current condition, as to how soon it may need to be replaced. There is also space to fill in costs and fiscal year as the Department refines their needs and available funding.

The asset inventory represents over \$1,000,000 of parks equipment and infrastructure, much of which needs to be replaced anywhere within a one to fifteen year time frame. Accordingly, the Park and Recreation Commission strongly advises the Town of Essex Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to note the true costs of this substantial inventory and continue to increase the Park & Rec Sinking Fund in the Town's budget to an adequate level to properly plan for and fund capital projects as arise in the upcoming years.

**CIP Projects** – The Park & Recreation Commission has identified the following projects as its current Capital Improvement Program as of November 14, 2012, and amended and updated at January 8, 2014. The projects are as follows:

1.	Main Street Park Embankment	\$25,000	Completed
2.	Clark's Pond Rehabilitation Project	\$16,000	Completed
3.	Main Street Park Gazebo	\$25,000	
4.	Hubbard Park Perimeter & Backstop Fence	\$58,600	
5.	Ivoryton Green Gazebo	\$25,000	
6.	Ivoryton Green Roadside Fence & Evergreen Trees	\$20,000	Completed
7.	Viney Hill Brook Park Paw Park enhancements	\$12,000	
	Partially Completed		

**Suggested Additions:**

- Score Board, Comstock/Hubbard
- Restroom, Comstock
- Concession Stand, Comstock/Hubbard
- Parking and Roadway, Comstock/Hubbard
- Fishing Dock, Viney Hill Brook Park
- Walking Path, Grove Street Park
- Japanese Knotweed Removal

Members discussed the individual parks and prioritized the projects that are to be completed.

Based on those comments, M. Barnes will compile a summarization of this evening's discussion which she will email to all members. M Barnes has requested that members review and any updates or questions by Commissioners are to be sent back to M. Barnes. M. Barnes stated that the finished product will be available at the January Park & Rec Commission meeting for discussion and presentation to the Board of Finance at their January 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**New Business**

- **Viney Hill Brook Park Conservation Commission Meeting Update**

A Mosa suggested that discussion on Viney Hill Brook Conservation Commission update to be tabled to the January 2017 regularly scheduled meeting.

**Public Comment**

Jim Rawn submitted a letter of appreciation and resignation from his membership on the Park and Recreation Commission, dated December 1, 2012.

A Mosa requested that this document be placed on record with notation of the respect for all of the great work J. Rawn has done.

D. Senn stated that when he first became a member of the Park & Rec Commission, it was J. Rawn who organized and coordinated all of the programming. There was no director at that time.

D. Senn stated that were it not for volunteers such as Jim Rawn, the Commission would not have flourished to the extent that it has.

### **General Discussion**

D. Senn suggested that Commission send something in the form of a formal thank you to J. Rawn in recognition for the many years of devoted service to the Park and Recreation Commission. D. Senn stated that he would like to personally thank J. Rawn on behalf of he and his family for all of the hard work he has done for the Town.

A Mosa stated that J. Rawn received the Park & Recreation honorary award from the State of Connecticut.

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION** made by D. Senn to adjourn at 8:10p.m. to the next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Regular Meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 3, 2016 at the Essex Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room B, 29 West Avenue at 7:00 p.m.; **SECONDED:** V. Willetts **Voting In Favor:** G Willetts, A. Mosa, D. Senn; **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0.

Respectfully submitted,

Stella C. Beaudoin  
Recording Secretary